



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

# THE JOURNAL OF POLITICAL ECONOMY

---

JANUARY—1907

---

## EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN INDUSTRIES: CIGAR- MAKING—ITS HISTORY AND PRESENT TEND- ENCIES<sup>1</sup>

The increased employment of women in cigar-making seems to indicate its tendency to develop into a “women’s industry”<sup>2</sup> and furnishes an interesting example of the industrial displacement of men by women. The history of the industry makes it of peculiar interest, because originally the women were displaced by the men, and in these later years they have only come into their own again.

The manufacture of cigars in this country is an industry of nearly a century’s growth,<sup>3</sup> but it has not continuously through-

<sup>1</sup> The following note is an incidental result of research work for a history of women’s work and wages in the United States. Information obtained at first hand in conversation with employers and employees, particularly that relating to the history of the industry, was often found to be conflicting, and an effort has been made to verify such statements by reference to the sources indicated from time to time in the footnotes. For the opportunity to carry on this work the writer is indebted to the Department of Economics of the Carnegie Institution of Washington.

<sup>2</sup> The term “women’s industry” is applied to two kinds of work: (1) such quasi-domestic employment as the needle trades; (2) the lighter factory industries—the making of paper boxes, hosiery and knit goods, collars and cuffs, corsets, and the like. Between 70 and 90 per cent. of the employees in these industries are women (*Twelfth Census, Occupations*, p. cxxvii), and in the future cigar-making will doubtless be classed, as it belongs, with this second group.

<sup>3</sup> It is not mentioned in Hamilton’s *Report on Manufactures* nor in Gallatin’s *Report* of 1810.

out its history employed a large proportion of women. This is, at first, not easy to understand, for it has always been a trade for which women are seemingly better qualified than men. No part of the making of cigars is heavy work,<sup>4</sup> and skill depends upon manual dexterity—upon delicacy and sensitiveness of touch. A brief description of the three important processes in a cigar factory—"stripping," "making," and "packing"—will serve to make this quite clear.

The preliminary process of "stripping," which includes "booking," is the preparation of the leaf for the hands of the cigar-maker. The large mid-rib is stripped out, and, if the tobacco is of the quality for making wrappers, the leaves are also "booked"—smoothed tightly across the knee and rolled into a compact pad ready for the cigar-maker's table. Even in the stripping-room there are different grades of work, all unskilled and all practically monopolized by women and girls.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> "In this occupation, unlike clothing, endurance is not required, and therefore the work of women is a more serious competitor than it is in the manufacture of clothing." (*Reports of the Industrial Commission*, Vol. XV, p. 388.) See also the *Eighth Annual Report New York Bureau of Labor*, p. 1024, where it is said that the trade has become open to the competition of young women "who find in cigar-making a trade readily learned and with easier work than most other trades adopted by women;" and for a similar comment see the *Fifth Annual Report*, p. 524.

<sup>5</sup> The stripping of the "filler" leaf for the inner "bunch" of the cigar is usually piece-work, but the stripping of the wrapper and binder is likely to be time-work, to avoid such haste as might tear the more expensive leaf. If a woman "books" her own wrappers, she gets higher pay than one who merely "strips;" and one who only "books" gets more than either, for this is much harder work and keeps the whole body in motion. The scale of wages in a large union factory in Boston furnishes a measure of the supposed differences in these occupations: binder-stripper, \$6 a week; wrapper-stripper who "books," \$7 a week; filler-stripper, \$6 to \$10 a week. The lack of skill in any of this work is indicated by the fact that in places where the union requires a three-years' apprenticeship for cigar-making two weeks is the rule for stripping, and competent forewomen say that "a bright girl can learn in a day." In England the situation in this occupation is rather different. "The work is well adapted for female hands, and in provincial factories they are largely employed in this department. In London, on the contrary, there seem to be not more than thirty women engaged as strippers." (Booth, *Life and Labor of the People*, Vol. IV, p. 224.)

Division of labor has been slow in making its way into cigar factories. The best cigar is still made by a single workman, and the whole process demands a high degree of skill. Slightly inferior cigars, however, can be made with "molds" by less skilled workmen.<sup>6</sup>

Packing cigars is called a "trade by itself." Those of like color must be packed together, and only the experienced eye can detect the varying shades of the leaf. Packers are the aristocrats of the trade in most places, and get better pay even than cigar-makers, though it is difficult to see that their work really requires more skill or more training than "making."<sup>7</sup> The packer stands at his work, while the maker seldom leaves his seat.

Cigar-making clearly seems to be a trade for which women are peculiarly adapted, and for a long time they have been very largely employed in the factories of Germany and England,<sup>8</sup> and

<sup>6</sup> The man who "makes the whole cigar" shapes his own bunch in his hand, binds it, and puts on the wrapper himself. "Molds" are blocks of wood in which a series of cigar-shaped hollows are carved. The bunches are placed in these and shaped under pressure. This makes it possible for inferior workmen to put on the wrapper. Machines which are now in use, and which will be described later, and "team-work," have simplified the process so that a still lower grade of labor has been made available.

<sup>7</sup> In an article in *Tobacco*, Vol. III, No. 19, on "The Boston Lookout," it is complained that "too much pay is given cigar-packers anyway. It is simply a matter of sharp eyesight, and men can make from \$25 to \$30 a week if they are able to detect the difference between a Madura, Colorado Madura, Colorado, Colorado Claro, or Claro cigar." Packing is the branch of the trade into which women have worked their way most slowly. There are, for example, in Boston today only two women packers. The wages of the one with whom I talked average through the year about \$31 a week (piece-work). Her foreman said she was as good a workman as the men, who, however, objected "to having a woman around. The men smoke all the time, and they can't talk as free as if she weren't here."

<sup>8</sup> For the employment of women in Germany see Frisch, *Die Organisationsbestrebungen der Arbeiter in der deutschen Tabak-Industrie*, pp. 10, 264, 265; and E. Jaffé, "Hausindustrie und Fabrikbetrieb in der deutschen Cigarrenfabrikation," *Schriften des Vereins für Socialpolitik*, Vol. LXXXVI, pp. 286-99. See also the *Cigarmaker's Official Journal*, June, 1896. That the trade in England is rapidly passing into the hands of women is pointed out in the *Economic Journal*, Vol. X, p. 521. See also Booth's *Life and Labor*, Vol. IV, pp. 220-22.

almost exclusively employed in Austria and France,<sup>9</sup> where the tobacco industry is a government monopoly. The history of their employment in this country is of interest; for, on the hypothesis that women's labor is cheaper, and therefore will be substituted for men's wherever it can be profitably employed, the woman cigar-maker would always have controlled the trade.

Originally cigar-making was one of the household industries,<sup>10</sup> and in the early years of the century nearly the whole of the Connecticut tobacco crop was made by the farmers' wives and daughters into cigars known to the trade as "supers," "long nines," and "short sixes." These cigars were sometimes peddled by the women, but more frequently they were bartered at the country stores, where they served as a substitute for currency. All of the groceries and dry goods used by the family during the year were often paid for in this way and represented the exchange value of the "leisure hours" of the farmer's wife. Although these were very inferior cigars, they were sold pretty generally throughout New England.<sup>11</sup> The passing of this early "homestead industry," which existed in Pennsylvania and other tobacco-growing states as well as in Connecticut, was very gradual; for the transition to the factory system did not, in

<sup>9</sup> The monopoly of the industry in Austria by women is evident from statistics in the *Bericht der K. K. Gewerbe-Inspectoren über ihre Amtsthätigkeit*, 1900, pp. 507-38. For French statistics see Mannheim, *De la condition dans les manufactures de l'état (tabacs-allumettes)*, especially pp. 17, 18, 33-38. Less accurate, but interesting, information may be found in the *American Federationist*, May, 1896, and April, 1903. In the former it is said that in France work in the government factories is considered highly desirable, and that "the women who obtain places are besieged with offers of marriage!" It is perhaps worth adding that a Bohemian in the trade in New York said to the writer: "Oh, yes, cigar-making is women's work in Bohemia. The government owns the factories and thinks the work is too easy for men!"

<sup>10</sup> Trumbull, *Memorial History of Hartford County, Connecticut*, Vol. I, pp. 218 ff.; Morgan, *Connecticut as a Colony and a State*, Vol. III, p. 274; report of the New York Bureau of Labor on *The Growth of Industry in New York* (1902), p. 153; special century edition of the *United States Tobacco Journal* (1900), which also notes an interesting tradition to the effect that the first domestic cigars were made in 1801 by a woman, the wife of a Connecticut tobacco-grower.

<sup>11</sup> Trumbull, *op. cit.*, p. 228.

cigar-making, involve the substitution of machine for hand-work, and farmers' wives continued to roll cigars until the imposition of the internal revenue tax—and even after that.<sup>12</sup> Their cigars, however, did not compare favorably with the finer factory-made product, and as Connecticut tobacco grew in favor, it became unprofitable to use it for the cheaper grades of work. Household industry, therefore, furnished a gradually decreasing proportion of the total manufactured product. But, unlike most work that left the home, cigar-making had not finally passed into the factory; for it was to be established as a domestic industry<sup>13</sup> on a much larger scale in the tenements of New York. Two questions are of interest at this point with regard to the history of the employment of women: Did they follow their work from the home to the factory? and, What was their part in the establishment of cigar-making as one of the early tenement industries?

<sup>12</sup> In Pennsylvania the making of cigars on the farm has lingered on even to the present day. In tobacco counties like York and Lancaster "the tobacco-growers themselves with their families occupy winter months and rainy days in making cigars." They are, of course, cheap cigars, "without shape." (*Reports of the Industrial Commission*, Vol. XV, p. 387.) Such local conditions have undoubtedly been the cause of the difficulties in the way of organization in that section which are so often alluded to in the Pennsylvania correspondence in the *Cigarmaker's Official Journal*, 1880-1900. See also *United States Tobacco Journal*, *loc. cit.*, p. 38. When the New York law was passed (1883) prohibiting tenement-house cigar factories, one of the large New York manufacturers said: "It will benefit the trade of New Jersey and Pennsylvania, where the farmers and their families can sit at home and make cigars." (*New York Tribune*, March 14, 1883.)

<sup>13</sup> Cigar-making on the Connecticut farm was more like a handicraft than a domestic industry, in the accepted technical sense of these words. The farmers' wives were quite independent in every sense, except that they commonly disposed of their product at a single market—the village store. Bücher (*Industrial Evolution*, Wickett's translation, p. 170) emphasizes the fact that dealing directly with the consumer is the essential characteristic of handicraft; and Unwin (*Industrial Organization in the XVIth and XVIIth Centuries*, p. 20) also makes the separation of the trading from the handicraft function one of the marks of the passing of handicraft. Following their classification, the home work of the farmers' wives would be more accurately described as that stage in the transition period in which handicraft was coming into "dependence on trade."

Women undoubtedly worked in the earliest factories.<sup>14</sup> What was possibly the first cigar factory in this country was established at Suffield, Conn., in 1810 and employed only women.<sup>15</sup> In 1832 returns from ten cigar factories in Massachusetts showed 238 women, 48 men, and 9 children employed;<sup>16</sup> but complete statistics for the period are not available. It was estimated that one-third of the persons employed at the trade in Connecticut in 1856 were women,<sup>17</sup> and the census shows that 740 women were employed in 1860.<sup>18</sup> This was, however, but one-ninth of the total number of employees, and included the unskilled "strippers" as well as all of the women who worked at home; so that the number of bona fide women cigar-makers in factories was probably very small, although it is difficult to say precisely what that number was.<sup>19</sup> Mr. Adolph Strasser, for many years president of the International Union, thought that

<sup>14</sup> This historical account is given with a due sense on the writer's part of its fragmentary character. Unlike more important industries, the history of cigar-making has received little attention, and is entirely neglected by Bishop in his useful *History of Manufactures*. While trustworthy accounts are difficult to find, it is believed that the one here given is accurate, even if incomplete.

<sup>15</sup> Trumbull, *op. cit.*, p. 219.

<sup>16</sup> "Documents Relative to the Manufactures in the United States," *Executive Documents*, Twenty-second Congress, First Session, Vol. I, pp. 66 ff. Women seem to have been employed in other cities too at this time. In 1835 the "Journeyman Segar Makers of Philadelphia" among other resolutions passed the following: "Resolved, that the present low wages hitherto received by the females engaged in segar making, is far below a fair compensation for the labor rendered. Therefore, Resolved, that we recommend them in a body to strike with us and thereby make it a mutual interest with both parties to sustain each other in their rights." (*Proceedings of the Government and Citizens of Philadelphia*, 1835; pamphlet published by Boston mechanics.)

<sup>17</sup> *United States Tobacco Journal*, *loc. cit.*, p. 34.

<sup>18</sup> *Eighth Census, Manufactures*, p. 735.

<sup>19</sup> Of these 740 women, 531 were in Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and Massachusetts (*Eighth Census, Manufactures*, pp. 49, 252, 539), where the household industry flourished. In New York, an important center of the factory industry, there were 1,968 men and only 60 women employed, and probably all of the latter were "strippers."

there were not more than 300 women in the whole trade at this time.<sup>20</sup>

But if the displacement of the woman cigar-maker is not easy to express statistically, the reason for it is not difficult to find. Cigar-making, as has been pointed out, is a highly skilled trade, and it was early discovered that among our immigrants were men able to make cigars that could compete with those imported from Germany and Spain. These immigrant cigar-makers who proved to have the superior workmanship that was indispensable to the development of the industry, took the places of the American women who had been formerly employed. The Cuban is said to have been the first male cigar-maker employed in this country, and as Spanish tobacco and Spanish-made cigars were in high favor, a large market was found for the Spanish cigars made here by Cuban workmen.<sup>21</sup> Later expert workmen among immigrants from other countries became competitors of the Cuban, and among German immigrants especially were men of exceptional skill and experience in the trade. The woman cigar-maker almost disappeared during this time, and there are men, both cigar-makers and manufacturers, in New York who say that there was "not a woman in the trade," except in the unskilled work of stripping, "back of the seventies;" and a recent report of the commissioner of labor <sup>22</sup> confirms this statement:

<sup>20</sup> *Report of the Senate Committee on Education and Labor, 1883* ("Labor and Capital"), Vol. I, p. 453, testimony of Adolph Strasser.

<sup>21</sup> "Spanish" cigars are still made exclusively by men (Cubans) wherever they are manufactured in this country. Employers have told me that this is not because women cannot make good cigars, but because no one but a Cuban understands Spanish or Cuban work. Women are employed as cigar-makers in Spain, but in Cuba they do only the unskilled work, stripping, packing, and labeling.

<sup>22</sup> *Eleventh Special Report of the Commissioner of Labor*, p. 575. "Formerly men only were engaged in cigar-making, but since the introduction of machinery, the proportion of female employees has become very large." This is obviously a superficial statement, for it disregards the employment of women in the early history of the industry, and is at variance with President Strasser's statement quoted *supra*.



Before the close of the decade following 1860 there was a marked increase in the proportion of women employed. Statistics showing this increase and the increase for later decades are given in the census, and the table below has been prepared from these census data, and indicates also the percentage which women have formed of the total number of employees and the increase percentage during each decade.<sup>23</sup>

	Number of Women Employed	Per cent. of Total Number of Employees	Per cent. Increase during Decade
1860* . . . . .	731	9	
1870 . . . . .	4,640	18	534
1880 . . . . .	13,198	25	184
1890 . . . . .	27,548	32	109
1900 . . . . .	41,294	40	50

\*It has already been pointed out that statistics for 1850 cannot be used because they refer to "tobacconists."

The number of women employed not only increased very rapidly after 1870, but the increase was greater proportionately than the increase in the number of men, and indeed since 1880 the industry has been a "declining" one for men. That is, the percentage increase in the male population has been greater during this time than the percentage increase in the number of men employed. In the light, however, of the statistics in this table, which show that in 1900 the women constituted only 40 per cent. of all the employees, it may seem like hazarding a large guess to say that cigar-making is becoming a "woman's industry." But it is not alone on the basis of the census statistics that this assertion is made. It will be shown later that there is

<sup>23</sup> The table is compiled from statistics given for "cigars and cigarettes" in *Twelfth Census, Manufactures*, Vol. III, p. 645. The numbers unfortunately do not form a basis for exact comparison. For 1860, women and girls are represented, and from 1870 to 1900, women are classified separately from "children under fifteen." By referring to the *Eighth Census*, p. 734, and the *Ninth Census*, p. 629 (*Manufactures*), it appears that the enumeration included only cigars in 1860 and 1870, while for the other three years cigars and cigarettes are represented. Statistics in the *Twelfth Census, Occupations*, p. lii, for "cigars and tobacco," seem curiously inconsistent with those in the census of manufactures.

a very great difference between the proportion of women among the employees in large factories where machinery is used and in those smaller or country establishments where it has not been introduced. Since the large machine factory is the factory of the future, the fact that it is being monopolized by women affords stronger evidence of the displacement of men than statistics for the industry as a whole would indicate. Testimony on this point will be given later. In the meantime an effort will be made to analyze the causes that have led to this displacement.

The year 1869 begins a new period in the history of the industry. Since then three factors seem to have worked together to bring about a very rapid increase in the employment of women: (1) increased immigration from Bohemia, where women are exclusively employed in cigar factories; (2) the invention of machinery, which has made the skilled workman less necessary; (3) a feeling on the part of employers that women are more docile than men, and that a large proportion of women among the employees would mean fewer strikes.

The immigration of Bohemian women cigar-makers began in 1869,<sup>24</sup> and meant the re-establishment of cigar-making as a household industry—but this time under the domestic rather than under the handicraft system. The home-work which occupied the leisure of the Connecticut farmer's thrifty wife is clearly not to be compared with the home-work of the Bohemian immigrant in the New York slums. The New England women were independent producers. They owned their raw

<sup>24</sup> *Testimony before the Ford Immigration Committee*, p. 364. President Gompers, of the American Federation of Labor, who was at that time in the trade in New York, told the writer that they were first brought over by employers to break the cigar-makers' strike of that year. This is intimated also in the testimony referred to above. The Bohemian immigration movement was greatly furthered at this time by the effects of the disastrous Austro-Prussian War and the granting of the legal rights to emigrate. See the account given by Josefa Humpal-Zeman in *Reports of the Industrial Commission*, Vol. XV, p. 507, which makes special note of the settlement of cigar-makers in New York; and Balch, "Sources of Slav Immigration," *Charities*, Vol. XV, p. 598. It is noted in the latter that a minor cause of immigration was a strike in the Bohemian tobacco factories in the seventies.

material, the homes in which they worked, and the finished product which they disposed of at their own convenience; the tenement women were helplessly dependent upon an employer who furnished the raw material, owned and marketed the product, and frequently charged them exorbitant rentals for the rooms in which they both lived and worked; they were merely hired wage-earners working for a single employer in their own homes instead of in his factory. The explanation of the home-work in both cases is found in the fact that cigar-making is peculiarly adapted for household manufacture, and for this reason it still exists, not only as a domestic industry, but as a lingering survival of handicraft.<sup>25</sup> When the only machine required is a pair of wooden molds, it is possible for the workman to own his own tools and a pair of molds, purchase his tobacco in small quantities, and, by disposing of the product quickly, carry on his trade as his own master and without having any capital.

By 1877, the year of the "great strike" which was meant to abolish it, cigar-making as a tenement industry had become firmly established. It grew rapidly after 1869 and aroused the first determined protest against "unsanitary home-work."<sup>26</sup> Its

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, Mrs. Kelley's account of the tenement worker in Chicago, who buys his own tobacco and disposes of his own product, and is in no way connected with a middleman or manufacturer. (*Reports of the Industrial Commission*, Vol. VII, p. 251.) Cigar-making has also an interesting history as a household industry in Germany. Recent statistics show that nearly one-fourth of the persons making cigars there today are *Hausarbeiter*. (Frisch, *Die Organisations-Bestrebungen der Arbeiter in der deutschen Tabak-Industrie*, pp. 4, 264; see also notes *supra*.) In England, however, there is no home-work in this industry, owing to excise regulations prohibiting the transfer of small quantities of the leaf, and to the fact that a rather expensive license must be obtained annually. "The trade, being fenced about with these safeguards, leaves no opening for those small domestic workshops which present such a difficult problem in the cheap tailoring and boot-making industries" (Booth, *Life and Labor of the People*, Vol. IV, pp. 219, 220).

<sup>26</sup> The Cigar-Maker's Union first called public attention to it in 1873 (*Report of the Senate Committee on Education and Labor*, 1883, Vol. I, p. 451), and began a vigorous campaign against it. While the great development of the clothing industry began in 1880, yet garment-making was also a very considerable tenement industry before that time, and was carried on under distressing condi-

development was due to Bohemian women who had worked in cigar factories in their own country. It is said that the customary method of Bohemian immigration was for the women to come first, leaving the men at work in the fields. Five or six wives would come over together, work at cigar-making as they did in Bohemia, and send money back for their husbands' passage, and then "the entire united family would take up the manufacture of cigars, emulating the industry of the mother."<sup>27</sup> At this time, too, came the introduction of the team system—a division of labor by which one person prepares the bundles and another rolls them. In Bohemia the men had worked only in the fields, and their wives taught them cigar-making at home after they came over. It was much easier, of course, for these men to learn the relatively unskilled work of "bunch-making" while their wives did the rolling than to learn how to make the whole cigar.<sup>28</sup>

tions. See statistics in the *Report of the New York Bureau of Labor* (1902) on the "Growth of Industry in New York," pp. 88-96, and the testimony regarding home-work in the *Report of the Senate Committee, supra*. Mrs. Florence Kelley, who has a wide first-hand knowledge of tenement work, says with regard to the tenement cigar-making law of 1883: "The manufacture of garments and other articles was so slight as not even to suggest to the cigar-makers the inclusion of the needle-trade workers in the struggle for the statutory prohibition of work in the tenements" (*Ethical Gains through Legislation* p. 231). A truer explanation of the restriction of the law of 1883 to cigars is found in the fact that the cigar-makers were strongly organized at this time, while the garment-workers were not. President Gompers, before the Ford Immigration Committee, spoke of the attempt to abolish tenement cigar-making as "one of our constant struggles."

<sup>27</sup> *New York Tribune*, November 6, 1877. An article in the *New York Sun*, October 20, 1877, claimed that as a rule the women cigar-makers were more intelligent than the men." This is due to the fact that in Bohemia the women work in the government factories and the men till the fields. . . . All of the members of the [tenement] family help in the housework, the husband being as skilled as the wife." The testimony in the *Report of the Ford Immigration Committee* in 1887, p. 381, was to the effect that the trade had been demoralized by the Bohemians who came over in large numbers, worked in tenement rooms, brought over gradually all of their relations, and taught them the trade.

<sup>28</sup> The writer is indebted to President Samuel Gompers for this account of the way in which the Bohemian women taught their trade to their husbands. "Team-work" ultimately became an important means of furthering the employ-

This decade, during which cigar-making established itself as a tenement industry, was also the decade of greatest prosperity in the history of the trade.<sup>29</sup> It was surely a decade of extraordinary exploitation of immigrant labor. Large manufacturers acquired blocks of tenements, for which they charged excessive rentals to their employees, who frequently, too, found themselves obliged to pay high prices for groceries and beer at stores owned by the employer. The expense of maintaining a factory was thus made part of the employees' burden; and the wages of "strippers and bookers" were also saved to the manufacturer, for the tobacco was prepared in the homes by the workers themselves, or more often by their children.<sup>30</sup> The system also proved an effective coercive measure, and the eviction of the tenement strikers by the landlord manufacturers in 1877 was one of the distressing features of the strike. It is difficult to make an exact statement either as to the extent of home-work or as to the number of women employed. It was estimated roughly that a majority of the cigars in New York were the product of tenement-house factories,<sup>31</sup> and so large was the proportion of women at work in them that the newspapers and manufacturers referred to the strike, which was directed largely against the home-work system, as an attack on the employment of women and children.<sup>32</sup> In 1882 a circular issued by the union of women, employers finding it easy to train young girls for the single process of bunch making or rolling, and cheaper to substitute them for skilled workmen who could make a complete cigar.

<sup>29</sup> *United States Tobacco Journal*, loc. cit., p. 40.

<sup>30</sup> There were numerous accounts of this system in the New York papers at the time of the strike in the fall of 1877. See, for example, the *New York Tribune*, July 10, and the *New York Sun*, December 3 of that year. See also *Ford Committee Report*, pp. 396, 397, 376, 368.

<sup>31</sup> *New York Sun*, December 3, 1877. Some estimates placed the proportion of tenement-made cigars as high as four-fifths of the New York product.

<sup>32</sup> The men who "make cigars in factories have struck against the women and children who make them in tenement houses" (Editorial in the *New York Tribune*, October 25, 1877). The manufacturers claimed that the strike was "a movement on the part of the cigar-makers to throw out of business many women who could or would not work in shops" (*New York Tribune*, October 24, 1877).

estimated that between 3,500 and 3,750 persons were employed at cigar-making in tenement houses,<sup>33</sup> and it seems reasonable to say that during the decade from 1870 to 1880 between two and three thousand women had engaged in cigar-making in their own homes.<sup>34</sup>

The increased employment of women as a result of the introduction of machinery comes at a later stage in the history of the industry.<sup>35</sup> So many unsuccessful machines were tried from time to time that it is not easy to fix any exact date as the period when machinery was first considered successful enough to be widely adopted. By 1887, however, several of the large

<sup>33</sup> *Thirteenth Annual Report, New York Bureau of Labor*, Vol. I, p. 552. Mr. Adolph Strasser, then president of the union, said in 1883 that there were 10,000 women in the trade, and "the number is increasing very rapidly, increasing every year almost at the rate of a thousand or more." This estimate was, of course, for the whole country and for both factory- and home-work. Mr. Strasser called attention to "the gradual introduction of children and females into the trade" "as one of the evils cigar-makers were facing." (*Report of Senate Committee on Education and Labor*, p. 453.)

<sup>34</sup> An estimate by the president of the union five years later fixed the number at 4,000 (*Report of the New York Bureau of Labor*, 1885, p. 154). While it is not necessary in the present study to continue the history of cigar-making in tenements, it may be added, to make the accounts somewhat more complete, that the law passed in 1883 abolishing this work was declared unconstitutional in 1885 (98 *New York Appeals*, p. 98). The union, however, continued its determined opposition to the system, and, owing in part no doubt to the use of its label and in part to general public sentiment against tenement work, and more perhaps to the development of the large machine factory, tenement cigar-making has almost disappeared. In 1901 there were in New York only 775 persons authorized to make cigars in tenements, while 23,329 family work-rooms were licensed in the clothing industry. (*Twentieth Annual Report, New York Bureau of Labor*, p. 46.)

<sup>35</sup> "Molds," which have already been described, and which are more like tools than machines, were introduced from Germany in 1869—the year in which production was also cheapened by the coming of Bohemian women and the introduction of the team system. Long after the mold came the long-filler bunching machine and the suction table, both hand machines; the machines for stripping and booking, and the short-filler bunching machine operated by power. The two last-named machines are used for much cheaper grades of cigars than the others. (*Eleventh Special Report of the Commissioner of Labor* pp. 565, 572, 573, 578.)

factories had begun to use machines, and in 1888 we find machines with women operators taking the places of skilled cigar-makers who were on a strike in Philadelphia.<sup>36</sup> In 1895 a New York cigar-maker said, in describing the situation:

Colleagues that left New York ten or more years ago would be astonished, if they returned now, to find that handwork has almost entirely disappeared. . . . The suction tables, which are in reality nothing else than wrapper-cutting machines, are used . . . as price-cutters. More so, because there are only girls employed on them. There are a few thousand of these tables in operation in this city with the prospect of increasing the number daily.<sup>37</sup>

After a recent investigation made by the federal Bureau of Labor, it was pointed out that

for both machine operators, bunch-making and rolling, a cheaper grade of labor may be employed. Formerly men only were engaged in cigar-making, but since the introduction of machinery, the proportion of female employees has been very large. In many factories only women and girls are employed on the bunch-making machines and suction tables, and the number of females is as high as 80 per cent. of the total number of employees.<sup>38</sup>

Statistics obtained in this investigation show that in nine open, or non-union, factories which had more than 4,000 employees, and in all but one of which machinery was used, 73.1 per cent. of the employees were women; while in eight union shops, which used no machinery, and employed only 527 persons, the proportion of women employed was only 36.1 per cent.<sup>39</sup> It is important to note that the machine, the large factory, and the increased employment of women go together.<sup>40</sup> It is also important to note that machinery is coming to be almost exclusively used in

<sup>36</sup> *Cigarmaker's Official Journal*, May, 1888.

<sup>37</sup> It is also added that "of the girls operating these tables only about 150 are unionized, . . . one-fourth of our members are out of work, and part of them are compelled to take jobs they are ashamed of." (*Ibid.*, October, 1895.)

<sup>38</sup> *Eleventh Special Report of the Commissioner of Labor*, p. 575. Attention is also called to the fact that "in the printing trade, the type-setting machine, owing to the strength of the union, has yielded no advantage to the proprietor by way of the introduction of cheaper labor, while in the cigar industry much of the gain to the manufacturer from the introduction of machinery comes from the opportunity of employing girls at low wages."

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, tables, p. 560.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 575. The statistics given above obviously indicate this; and see also *Twelfth Census*, Vol. IX, p. 671.

the manufacture of cheap cigars, and that the market for these cheap machine-made cigars is rapidly growing.<sup>41</sup>

Other available statistics add further testimony to show that there is a greater proportion of women employed in the large factories. In Professor Dewey's report on *Employees and Wages*<sup>42</sup> most of the data for cigar-making, even in the establishment comparison, are from relatively small factories; but in one of the larger ones, 75.6 per cent.,<sup>43</sup> and in another 75.6 per cent.,<sup>44</sup> of the employees were women; and in several others, where men are still more exclusively employed, it is noted among the changes in the establishment between 1890 and 1900 that "no females were employed in 1890."<sup>45</sup> In recent factory inspectors' reports there is some further evidence on this point. Statistics for the seven large factories in New York City, each of which employs more than 200 women, show that 55.5 per cent., 60.5 per cent., 70.2 per cent., 73.3 per cent., 86.2 per cent., 88.3 per cent., and 91.3 per cent, respectively, of all of the employees are women.<sup>46</sup> In Binghampton, an important cigar-making center, reports from four factories, each of which employed more than 100 women, showed that they constituted, respectively, 62.6 per cent., 62.9 per cent., 75.9 per cent., and

<sup>41</sup> "There is no doubt that the use of machinery in cigar-making is on the rapid increase. It is estimated that 85 per cent. or more of the cigars manufactured in the United States are retailed at 5 cents or less, and some manufacturers predict that within ten or fifteen years all of this class of cigars will be made by machinery." (*Eleventh Special Report of Commissioner of Labor*, pp. 574, 575.) It is of interest in this connection that an editorial on "The Five Cent Cigar" in *Tobacco*, January 19, 1900, deprecates the "sudden jumping into prominence of the factory brand," and complains that the well-advertised factory brands of the five-cent cigar have almost usurped the market.

<sup>42</sup> *Twelfth Census, Special Reports*.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1048.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1037.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1050, 1044, 1042. Although not directly to the point, it is interesting enough to quote that it is noted as a "special feature" of one establishment that "in 1900 the wrapper-classer was a woman receiving \$6 per week. In 1890 the wrapper-classer was a man receiving \$12 a week." (*Ibid.*, p. 1046.)

<sup>46</sup> *Fifteenth Annual Report of the Factory Inspector of the State of New York* (1900). See especially report of the second district, Boroughs of Manhattan and Bronx.



68.7 per cent. of all employees.<sup>47</sup> In the largest cigar factory in Philadelphia the 996 women who were employed were 97.3 per cent. of the entire working force; and in the large Harrisburg factory 993 women were 95 per cent. of all the persons employed.<sup>48</sup>

Similar factors that have helped to increase the employment of women have been the formation of the trust,<sup>49</sup> which has greatly furthered the movement toward large-scale production; and the introduction of the "team system," which has already been described, and which, it has been frankly said, is used, not as a method of increasing the output, but because cheaper labor can be employed.<sup>50</sup>

In discussing further the tendency toward increased employment of women as a means of avoiding or ending strikes, some account may also be given of the relation of the women to the Cigar-Maker's International Union. The union was organized in 1851; and in 1867 the constitution was altered so that women and negroes, heretofore excluded, became eligible to membership.<sup>51</sup> In 1877 women were employed in large numbers to break the strike of that year. Several hundred girls were taught

<sup>47</sup> *Fifteenth Annual Report*, etc.

<sup>48</sup> *Thirteenth Annual Report of the Factory Inspector of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* (1902), pp. 387, 417.

<sup>49</sup> The union brings a bitter indictment against what it calls the "child-labor employing trust." "The tobacco trust is its bitter foe and is probably the largest employer in the country of tenement-house sweat-shops and child labor." (*Cigarmaker's Official Journal*, February 15, 1904.) "We estimate that 90 per cent. of the employees of the trust are females, and positively state that the great majority are minors." (*Ibid.*, November 15, 1902.)

<sup>50</sup> *Eleventh Special Report, Commissioner of Labor*, p. 565.

<sup>51</sup> Strasser's "History of the Cigar-maker's Union," in McNeill's *The Labor Movement*, p. 600. The union admits only cigar-makers proper, bunch-makers and rollers, and packers. The latter, however, are organized in separate "locals." (*Eleventh Special Report, Commissioner of Labor*, p. 557.) "Strippers" and other unskilled and miscellaneous help are excluded, but in some cities the strippers have unions of their own. In Boston such an organization has existed for six years, and has more than six hundred members, all women, who, through their organization, have obtained many privileges from their employers.

the trade,<sup>52</sup> and employers went so far as to call the strike "a blessing in disguise," since it "offered a new employment for women and secured workers whose services may be depended on at low wages."<sup>53</sup> In this same year, however, the Cincinnati cigar-makers struck successfully for the removal of all women from the workshops,<sup>54</sup> and in some other cities similar strikes were inaugurated, but failed.<sup>55</sup> In 1879 the president of the union announced that one of its aims would be "the regulation of female labor;"<sup>56</sup> and in 1881 he strongly advised the unions, in view of the fact that the employment of women was constantly increasing, "to extend the right hand of brotherhood to them;" and added: "Better to have them with us than against us. . . . They can effect a vast amount of mischief outside of our ranks as tools in the hands of the employer against us."<sup>57</sup> The president of the New York local in 1886 complained that Bohemian women were doing work "that men were form-

<sup>52</sup> The employers claimed that between 3,000 and 4,000 girls had been taken on (*New York Sun*, November 26, 1877), but this was clearly an exaggerated statement made to overawe the strikers. The *New York Tribune*, November 14, 1877, gives what is evidently a reliable statement, showing that eight of the largest firms had together employed less than 1,000 girls.

<sup>53</sup> *New York Sun*, November 26, 1877. Employers also claimed an unusually large sale for the bad cigars made by these untrained "strike-breakers," because the boxes bore the legend: "These cigars were made by American girls." (*Ibid.*)

<sup>54</sup> *Cincinnati Daily Inquirer*, August 29, 30, and September 30, 1877. The employers said that the girls "just left of their own accord" and were not discharged to conciliate the strikers! The latter had claimed that the girls worked 20 per cent. cheaper than the men. The *Inquirer*, in commenting on the situation, said: "The men say the women are killing the industry. It would seem that they hope to retaliate by killing the women."

<sup>55</sup> An account of such a strike in Boston is given in the *First Annual Report of the Massachusetts Bureau of Labor*, p. 241. In Rochester, where a similar strike was also unsuccessful, the employer said that the girls did the same kind of work as the men, were just as capable and "could be hired for fifty cents less; and that is the reason we hire them!" (*Report of the New York Bureau of Labor for 1885*, p. 156.)

<sup>56</sup> McNeill, *op. cit.*, p. 603.

<sup>57</sup> President's report at the Cleveland convention, printed in the *Cigarmaker's Official Journal*, October 10, 1881.

erly employed to do. They have driven the American workmen from our trade altogether. They work for a price that an American could not work for.”<sup>58</sup> In 1894 a president of the international union said: “We are confronted with child- and female labor to an alarming extent;”<sup>59</sup> and in 1901, at a meeting of the American Federation of Labor, the cigar-makers asked for the passage of resolutions expressing opposition to the use of machinery in their trade and to the employment of women and children.<sup>60</sup> The hostility of the union to women is not difficult to understand. The women seemed to be lowering a standard wage that the men, through organization, were trying to uphold. They had, moreover, the workingman’s belief in the old “lump of labor” fallacy, and for every woman who was employed they saw “a man without a job.” The union has, however, stood squarely for the same wage scale for both men and women, while in England the union maintains a woman’s scale that is 25 per cent. lower than the men’s.<sup>61</sup> As in other industries, a much smaller proportion of the women than of the men in the trade are members of the union,<sup>62</sup> and the women seldom attend the meetings, and take small part in the proceedings when they do.<sup>63</sup>

Leaving the subject of labor displacement, certain other questions connected with the employment of women in the trade

<sup>58</sup> *Report of Ford Immigration Committee*, p. 364.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, October, 1894.

<sup>60</sup> *Tobacco*, December 20, 1901.

<sup>61</sup> In England the women had a separate union for many years, and when they joined the men’s union, the question of how to reconcile the wage scales that had prevailed in the two unions caused great difficulty. To have raised the women’s scale to the men’s level would, it was felt, “have meant to drive the women from the trade and to alienate public sympathy.” (*Economic Journal*, Vol. X, pp. 564, 570.)

<sup>62</sup> President Perkins, in a letter to the writer, estimated that less than 15 per cent., of the members of the union were women—obviously a very small percentage in view of the fact that women form so large a proportion of the total number of employees.

<sup>63</sup> This is almost invariably the rule when men and women are in one organization. It was said in the *Report of the Senate Committee on Education and Labor*, Vol. II, p. 809, that the women allowed the men to take the position of superiority that belonged to them!

must be briefly noticed. These are: the effect of the work upon the health of women, the nationality and conjugal condition of the women employed, their relative efficiency in comparison with men, and their wages.

Conflicting testimony is found as to the effect of cigar-making upon the health of women. Like all confining sedentary work, it must be to some extent unhygienic; but much depends upon conditions in the factories themselves, which, of course vary widely in regard to light, cleanliness, and ventilation. It has been pointed out that the work is for the most part very light, and certainly the strain on the nervous system is far less than in factories where there is the constant noise of heavy machinery. In London, a recent investigation showed that the trade was not an unhealthful one for women,<sup>64</sup> and Dr. Oliver, after carefully weighing the testimony that has been given on both sides for the last twenty years, confirmed this conclusion.<sup>65</sup> The annual report of the union for 1901 showed that in 1890, 49 per cent., and in 1900, 33 per cent., of their deceased members died of tuberculosis. The average age of deceased members had been raised during the same time from thirty-seven and one-half to forty-three and one-half years.<sup>66</sup> Aside from any question as to the effect of tobacco on the system of the worker, it is clear that shorter hours and improved conditions can do much to make the industry a more healthful one.

Census statistics regarding the nationality of the women in

<sup>64</sup> *Economic Journal*, Vol. X, p. 567.

<sup>65</sup> Oliver, *Dangerous Trades*, p. 793. Some physicians have claimed that all tobacco work is injurious to the women engaged in it, that they have very few children, and that abortions are frequent among them. An investigation among cigar-makers in the New York tenements showed an average of about 1.5 children to a family, which is, of course, very unusual in a tenement district. Mr. Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor, who was at that time in the trade thought, however, that this was an underestimate. For a somewhat lengthy discussion of the whole subject see *Report of the New York Bureau of Labor* for 1884, pp. 224-36. See also the testimony of Mr. Gompers and Mr. Strasser in *Report of the Senate Committee on Education and Labor*, pp. 273, 274, 453.

<sup>66</sup> *Cigarmaker's Official Journal*, September, 1901.

"cigars and tobacco" factories show that 53.4 per cent. are either foreign-born or of foreign parents; of these 29.2 per cent. are German and 20.8 per cent. Austro-Hungarian.<sup>67</sup> In New York the great factories are in the "Bohemian district," and Bohemian women are largely employed. The official journal of the union contains regularly articles and important notices in German and Bohemian as well as in English.

A larger percentage of married women is employed in the manufacture of cigars and tobacco than in any other list of industries given under the manufacturing group, with the single exception of seamstresses; 11.8 per cent. of the women in the whole group and 16.4 per cent. of those in "cigars and tobacco" were married.<sup>68</sup> There are several reasons for this: Among the Bohemians there is less prejudice against the work of married women than among most other nationalities.<sup>69</sup> There is also the fact that cigar-making is to some extent a home industry; and, further, it is a skilled trade at which competent women can earn higher wages than they can in most other industries that are open to women.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>67</sup> *Twelfth Census, Occupations*, pp. cxcix-ccx.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. ccxxii. This seems to contradict the statement that the average life of girls at the trade is five years (see *Eleventh Special Report of the Commissioner of Labor*, p. 569). For other contradictory evidence see *Charities, loc. cit.*, p. 195. Census statistics as to age show, however, that 69 per cent. of the women in "tobacco and cigars" are below twenty-four while only 54.1 per cent. of all of the women in manufacturing pursuits are below this age (computations based on Table 4, *Twelfth Census, Occupations*). Since these figures are not for cigars alone, they are not largely significant. The same statistics show a very large increase for the decade in the number of girls employed and a very small increase in the number of boys.

<sup>69</sup> Testimony before the (Reinhard) *Committee on Female Labor, New York Assembly*, 1896, p. 817.

<sup>70</sup> This is so true that many of them say it "pays" to go on with their work and "hire a cheaper woman" to do part of their housework and look after their children. One forewoman spoke as if there were a superstition about the work: "It's a trade you always come back to. I don't know why, but it is!" The employment of married women seems also to be common in other countries. In Germany there is in the union a confinement benefit for women (*Cigarmaker's Official Journal, May 15, 1903*) and in interesting contrast to this is section 4 of the sick-benefit clause which was adopted by the Americans at the convention of

The constant reference to women as a "cheap grade of labor" must not lead to the conclusion that women do not become as skilled cigar-makers as men and do not work on the higher grades of hand-made cigars. Undoubtedly there is a larger proportion of men than women among the most efficient workers in many factories, but some women who are "equal to any man" will be found in most of them, and foremen and manufacturers alike testify to the fact that the highest possible skill is often attained by their women employees.<sup>71</sup> But in this, as in all other trades, the ever-present possibility of marriage militates strongly against the woman worker's attaining her fullest efficiency. The few years that the woman who "marries and leaves" spends at the bench cannot be expected to develop the quality of workmanship that comes with life-long service. In anticipation, too, of the shorter "working-life," a girl is often unwilling to serve the real apprenticeship so necessary in a skilled trade like cigar-making, and more often still her parents are not willing to undergo the sacrifices this may entail. In cities where the union is strong and a long period of preliminary training is made a condition precedent to entering the trade, there are relatively fewer women employed.<sup>72</sup> It must not be overlooked, however, that this condition is due in some measure to a feeling

1880: "Female members of any local union shall not be entitled to any sick benefit three weeks before or five weeks after confinement" (*ibid.*, October, 1888). It is a curious bit of history that in Bremen as early as 1847 an exception to a law which prohibited women from working in cigar factories was made in favor of the wives of the men employed (Frisch, *op. cit.*, p. 12, N. 2).

<sup>71</sup> In London Mrs. Oakesbatt found that, while there might be an exceptional woman who was "better than any man" yet, on the average, the men were faster workers than the women (*Economic Journal*, Vol. X, p. 570). I regret that I was unable to obtain any exact statements as to the relative output of men and women engaged in the same kind of work. In the *Eleventh Annual Report of the Commissioner of Labor*, pp. 517-19, returns as to their relative efficiency, are given from nine establishments. In four, men were more efficient than women; in one, women were more efficient than men; in four they were of equal efficiency.

<sup>72</sup> In Boston, for example, where a three-years' apprenticeship is required, there is one girl to nearly 200 boys regularly apprenticed, and this one girl is serving in the small shop of a relative.

on the part of employers that boys are more profitable apprentices, and that the work is not proper for girls.<sup>73</sup> It is clearly true that, if the "aristocracy of male workers at the head" continues, the apprenticeship situation will be one of the explanations.<sup>74</sup>

Turning now to the important but difficult question of wages, it appears that statistics of wages that are at all reliable are obtainable only for the last decade. The tables given below show the weekly medium wage from the Dewey report,<sup>75</sup> classified wages from the Dewey report, and the weekly average wage computed from the data in the *Nineteenth Annual Report of the Commissioner of Labor*.

WEEKLY MEDIAN WAGE FROM THE DEWEY REPORT FOR TWELFTH CENSUS<sup>76</sup>

OCCUPATION	1890		1900	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Packers .....	16.50	7.50	18.50	8.00
Cigar-makers or rollers*....	13.00	5.50	13.00	6.00
Strippers .....	5.00	5.50	5.50	6.00
All occupations.....	11.00	6.00	11.50	5.50

\*As the men are called "cigar-makers" instead of "rollers," it is probable that the wages given above do not represent the same work for women as for men.

<sup>73</sup> It is said, for example, that girls cannot carry tobacco and wait on the women and men at the benches as the boys do, but in England only girls are employed for this kind of work (*Economic Journal*, Vol. X, p. 565). Other employers say it is not worth while teaching a girl who is likely to leave the trade soon. Until recently a school has been conducted in New York to teach cigar-making. The manager said he had, in six years, taught 3,000 persons, of whom 80 per cent. were women and girls. There is no apprenticeship now in the New York trade, but in Boston it is practically impossible now for a girl to obtain a chance to "serve." In London, on the other hand, the large majority of apprentices are girls. (See Booth's *Life and Labor*, Vol. IV, p. 227.)

<sup>74</sup> There are two minor advantages connected with the employment of women that may, perhaps, be noted in discussing this question of relative efficiency. One is that the woman "is always here on Monday morning," as one employer tersely put it; the other is that no inconsiderable saving is effected through the fact that the women do not smoke, for it is an unwritten law of the trade that the cigar-maker always "gets his smokes off the boss."

<sup>75</sup> *Twelfth Census, Special Report on Employees and Wages*.

<sup>76</sup> This table is for all sections of the country. The returns from the New

## CLASSIFIED WAGE TABLE COMPILED FROM THE DEWEY REPORT

	NUMBER OF WOMEN EARNING					
	Less than \$3	\$3 to \$5	\$5 to \$7	\$7 to \$9	\$9 to \$11	\$11 to \$13
Packers .....	2	7	4	6	8	3
Bunch-breakers .....	..	18	42	12	1	..
Rollers .....	1	40	88	43	14	..
Strippers .....	13	37	104	34	..	..
Total .....	16	102	238	95	23	3

## WEEKLY AVERAGE WAGE FROM BUREAU OF LABOR REPORT

	1890		1895		1900		1903	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Packers* .....	\$16.20	\$8.41½	\$17.82	\$ 6.43½	\$18.36	\$6.36	\$20.35	\$ 6.95½
Cigar-makers or rollers (hand)† ...	10.60	9.41	10.60	10.03	10.40	8.17½	11.77	10.83
Bunch-makers (hand)† .....	9.69	7.84	8.80	7.84	10.20	6.76	12.00	10.08
Strippers* .....	3.36	6.00	3.88½	4.80	4.20	6.60	4.94	7.80
Bunch-makers (machine) .....		6.60	....	6.00	....	7.08	....	7.08
Cigar-rollers (machine) .....	no men employed	7.20	....	6.60	....	7.67	....	8.90½

\* In these occupations the men worked more hours per week than the women.

† In both of these occupations the women worked more hours per week than the men. As in the Dewey report, for men the designation is "cigar-makers" and for women "rollers."

Cigar-making is one of the few industries in which men and women compete directly,<sup>77</sup> and for this reason the difference in their wages is extremely interesting. It is not easy, however, to say just how much of an injustice the woman's lower wage indi-

England states are interesting as indicating the division of labor there:

	1890	1900
Cigar-makers (all men) .....	\$16.60	\$18.00
Strippers (all women) .....	5.50	6.00

<sup>77</sup> It is not fair, ordinarily, to compare women's wages with men's, because men and women in factories so seldom do the same work. In cigar-making and cigar-packing, however, there have been exceptions to this general rule. See Webb, *Economic Journal*, Vol. I, p. 645, and see also this *Journal*, January, 1906, pp. 38, 39.



cates, for the work is largely "piece-work," and the women may have been slower, or they may not have worked at the same rate and on the same kind of cigars.<sup>78</sup> That the women "strippers" earn more than the men is explained by the fact that very capable women are found in this occupation, but ordinarily none but very old men who are no longer competent to earn a "man's wage" at anything. In the report of the Bureau of Labor on *Work and Wages of Men, Women and Children* the efficiency and wages of the employees are both reported, and, with a single exception, the returns from all of the cigar factories showed that women were receiving less pay than men for equally efficient work. It has already been pointed out that in union factories the women receive the same rate of wages as the men.

In following the history of the industry from the home-work of the New England farm to the home-work of the New York tenement, and from the early factories in which the men immigrants displaced the women to the modern factory in which women and machinery have been displacing men, no attempt has been made to discuss certain economic questions which arise with regard to the employment of women in this as in almost every other industry: Why is their labor "cheaper" than that of men? And are there reasons other than this to explain why, in coming into an industry, they drive out the men instead of working side by side with them? Does their monopoly of a trade mean a permanent lowering of the standard of living of the workers employed in it? A consideration of these, and some other related theoretical questions, is clearly beyond the scope of the present study. It should, however, be pointed out in conclusion that, while wages have steadily gone down in the cigar-making industry, as it has been taken over by women,<sup>79</sup> yet one must guard against attributing this solely to what is often vaguely

<sup>78</sup> In London women in the cigar-making industry get from 15 to 40 per cent. less than men (Booth, *Life and Labor*, Vol. IV, p. 226). It is pointed out *supra* that in the union there the women's wage scale is 25 per cent. lower than the men's.

referred to as "the woman's lower standard of life." It must not be forgotten that with the women have come the mold, the team system, and machinery, all tending to lower wages by diminishing the demand for skilled workmen. Distinct, too, from the influence of women's work as such has been the deteriorating effect of cheap immigrant labor and the tenement system. There are still, however, possibilities for the skilled worker in the trade. Reliable statistics show that men can yet earn very good wages,<sup>80</sup> so that the future for women is not wholly without promise. The discouraging features that have marked their relation to the industry are, many of them, well known to be only temporary, and will disappear as the woman worker's lack of proper training, ambition, and realization of the value of organization is overcome.

EDITH ABBOTT

WASHINGTON, D. C.

<sup>79</sup> The lowering of the wage-level by the women was a subject of complaint in the decade 1880-90 and even earlier. See the accounts of the strike of 1877 referred to *supra*, and see also the testimony in the *Report of the Ford Immigration Committee*, pp. 379 ff., in which it is said that "the wages of journeymen cigar-makers have fallen down to the level of the wages of the women."

<sup>80</sup> The Dewey report (*supra*) showed that the medium wage for cigar-makers in New England, where the union was strong, was \$18 to \$18.40, and the highest wage was \$32 to 32.49 a week. A few cigar-packers were earning even more—from \$32 to 42 a week. The report of the Bureau of Labor on *The Restriction of Output*, p. 563, showed an average wage of \$18.29 and a maximum wage of \$29.40 in union shops in Chicago.